

**DEPARTMENT OF SERVICES FOR PERSONS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

**CITY OF NEW HAVEN**

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**Mayor John DeStefano, Jr.**

March 16, 2009

Senator Gayle S. Slossberg  
Representative James Field Spallone  
Government Administration and Elections Committee  
Room 2200, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Senate Bill 840 – Commission on Aging

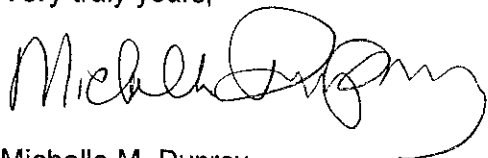
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I request that you not approve the Governor's proposal to eliminate the Commission on Aging. The Commission on Aging is the lead agency for the Long Term Care Advisory Council, of which I am a member, and as such plays a critical role in the development and leadership on state policy affecting the elderly and people with disabilities. The circumstance of both groups will suffer immensely if the Commission on Aging is eliminated as well as cost the state in other ways.

For decades the State of Connecticut has seen many issues as being based on diagnosis or age, but in reality, that is not the most effective strategy. The Commission on Aging has lead the way to educate leaders that limitations and barriers affect those with a variety of diagnoses for both young and old and the state needs to dismantle the artificial barriers to its programs based on these criteria. The Commission on Aging has taken a lead role in developing a long term strategy to meet the needs of elderly and people with disabilities. The biggest example of this is the Commission on Aging's lead role in the Long Term Care Strategic Plan. The Plan will lead the state to a better provision of services and better public policy should it be implemented.

The State of Connecticut does not have a commission for people with disabilities, even though more than 500,000 residents live with disabilities. Seeing the commonality of issues, the Commission on Aging has stepped in and advocated for both groups. The elimination of this Commission will have detrimental affect on the 439,000 elderly and the 547,000 disabled in our state. Please give thoughtful consideration to the incredible value of this agency and vote against eliminating the Commission on Aging.

Very truly yours,



Michelle M. Duprey